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For Immediate Release

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VOSHA Returning to Enforcement Mode

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irene, the Vermont Occupational Safety and Health staff members were directed and authorized to operate in an õadvisory capacityö to assist and facilitate with clean-up and recovery across the State. This included answering questions for employers and workers, and following up with employers that may have been working unsafely. Many health and safety hazards were, and continue to be, present in the clean-up and recovery work. The Departmentøs goal was to help recovery efforts to proceed in a safe manner, avoiding accidents or injuries during the work. During the time from the date of the storm until today, VOSHA did not conduct enforcement inspections of storm-related activities, but rather, worked with the affected groups to minimize hazards and risks.

VDOL announced that effective today, October 21, 2011, VOSHA will now shift from the advisory capacity to full compliance and enforcement. VOSHA Inspectors will engage in their regular duties which include worksite inspections, and will issue appropriate citations and penalties for violations of the safety and health standards in Vermont. VOSHA has special emphasis programs in trenching and excavation and falls. VOSHA Inspectors that encounter workers exposed to these hazards at a worksite are required to stop and conduct an inspection.

Vermont employers and workers are encouraged to learn more about safety and health trainings, protocols and laws by visiting the Vermont Department of Labor website.

